

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1842
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS DURBAN 0410

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJ: VIOLENCE AT SUGAR MILL STRIKE

1. ACCORDING TO TODAY'S NATAL MERCURY RE COURSE TO VIOLENCE BY SOME 600 AFRICAN AND INDIAN STRIKERS AT DARNALL SUGAR MILL 50 MILES NORTH OF DURBAN NOVEMBER 14 FORCED WIVES AND CHILDREN OF WHITE EMPLOYEES TO TAKE REFUGE IN NEARBY CLUB-HOUSE UNDER PROTECTION HEAVILY ARMED POLICE. CHANTING GANGS OF WORKERS, REPORTEDLY ARMED WITH STICKS, CANE KNIVES AND PIPES, ROAMED THROUGH MILL AND NEARBY RESIDENTIAL AREAS DEMANDING HIGHER PAY AND REFUSING NEGOTIATE WITH MANAGEMENT. AS USUAL, COMPANY'S WORKS COMMITTEE PROVED USELESS IN MEETING CRISIS. COMPANY MANAGEMENT HAS ISSUED ULTIMATUM REFUSING ANY WAGE INCREASE AND DEMANDING THAT STRIKERS RETURN TO WORK TODAY OR BE FIRED.

2. COMMENT: DARNALL STRIKE FOLLOWS BRIEF FLARE-UPS WITHIN THE LAST MONTH AT TWO OTHER OF THE FIVE MILLS IN NATAL OWNED BY HULETTS SUGAR COMPANY, THE LARGEST SUGAR PRODUCER IN THE COUNTRY. BOTH OF THOSE STRIKES LIKEWISE INVOLVED VIOLENCE BY WORKERS AND WERE ENDED BY FIRM POLICE ACTION. ALTHOUGH TOUGH NO-CONCESSIONS STANCE BY HULETTS MANAGEMENT UNCLASSIFIED

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TOGETHER WITH POLICE INTERVENTION HAS CONTROLLED STRIKES

THUS FAR, THEY DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE ELIMINATED WORKERS'
GRIEVANCES.
HOLMES

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NNN

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